

Publicity and Some of Its Results, Including a Romance of Our Square and a Eulogy of Wearing the Green.

BARBARAN

BY
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THAT men of the sobriety and standing of Cyrus the Gaunt, MacLachlan, Leon Coventry, the Little Red Doctor and Boggs (I do not count young Phil Stacey) should paint their noses green and frequent dubious cellars, calls for explanation. The explanation is Barbran.

The Bonnie Lassie, whose artistic deviations often take her far afield, met Barbran. They went for coffee to a queer little burrow decorated with improving sententious love, Barbran told the Bonnie Lassie, was making its blue-smoked, bobbed-haired, attractive and shrewd little proprietress quite rich. Barbran hinted that she was thinking of improving on the Bonnie Lassie's idea, if she could find a suitable location.

The Bonnie Lassie was not impressed. What did impress her about Barbran was a certain gay yet restful charm, the sort of difficult thing that our indomitable proprietress loves to catch and fix in her wonderful little brogues. She set about catching Barbran.

Barbran came to the Bonnie Lassie's house, moused about our square in a rapt manner and stayed. She rented a room from the Angel of Death, "Boggs Kill Bugs" is the remainder of his sign, just over Madame Tal-laffers' apartments, and in the course of time stopped at my bench and looked at me contemptuously. She was a small person, with shy, soft eyes.

She sat down and smiled at me. "I'm going to start a coffee cellar," she said. "You are, Miss Barbara Ann Waterbury?"

"It is true that my parents named me that," she said, "but my friends call me 'Barbran' because I always used to call myself that when I was little, and I want to be called Barbran here."

"That's very friendly of you," I observed. "You think I'm a fool," she observed calmly. "But I'm not. I'm going to become a local institution. A local institution can't be called Barbara Ann Waterbury. It's a croche or a drinking fountain or something like that, can it?"

"It cannot, Barbran," I said. "Thank you, Mr. Dominic," said Barbran gratefully. She then proceeded to sketch out for me her plans for making her coffee cellar and herself a local institution, which should lure hopeful seekers for Bohemia from the far parts of Harlem and Jersey City, and even such outer realms of darkness as New Haven and Cohoes.

"What do you intend to do," said Barbran, "as soon as I get my great idea worked out?"

"I got the great idea was I was to learn later from the lips of young Phil Stacey, who appeared shortly after my new friend had departed, a peculiarly ugly, but extremely plain and friendly face. Said young Phil carelessly:

"Dominie, who's the newcomer?" "That," said I, "is Barbran." "Barbran," he repeated with a rising inflection. "It sounds like a breakfast food."

"As she pronounces it, it sounds like a strain of music," said I. "What's the rest of her name?" "I am not officially authorized to communicate that."

"Are you officially authorized to present your friends to her?" "On what do you base your claim to acquaintanceship, my boy?" I asked austerely.

"Oh, claim? Well, you see, a couple of days ago she was on the cross-town car, and I—well, I just happened to notice her, you know. That's all."

nauseating virtues that any self-respecting man would rather live in a badger. No such people as his characters ever lived or ever could live, because a righteously enraged populace would have killed 'em in early childhood. He's the smuggest fraud and best seller in the United States. Wheelwright? The crudest, shrewdest, most preposterous panderer to weak-minded—

"When? Help! I didn't know what I was starting," protested my visitor. "As a literary critic you're some big name, Dominic. I begin to suspect that you don't care an awful lot about Mr. Wheelwright's style of composition. Just the same, I've got to read him—all of him. Do you think I'll find his stuff in the Penny Cyclopedia?"

"My poor lost boy! Probably not. It is doubtless all out in the hands of eager readers."

However, Phil contrived to round it up somewhere. The awful and unsuspected results I beheld on my first visit of patronage to Barbran's cellar, the occasion being the formal opening. A large and curious crowd of five persons, including myself and Phil Stacey, was there. Outside an old English design of a signboard with a wheel on it creaked despairingly in the wind. Below was a legend, "At the Sign of the Wheelwright."

The interior of the cellar was decorated with scenes from the novels of Harvey Wheelwright, triumphant virtue, discomfited villains, benighted blunders, chaotic embraces, edifying death beds and orange blossoms. They were unsigned, but well I knew whose was the shame. Over the fireplace hung a framed letter from the great soul. It began: "Dear Young Friend and Admirer, and ended, 'Yours for the light, Harvey Wheelwright.'"

The guests ate and drank everything in sight. They then left; that is to say, four of them did. Finally Phil departed, glowering at me. I was a patient soul. No sooner had the door slammed behind him than I turned to Barbran, who was looking discouraged.

"Well, what have you to say in your defense?" "The Barbran's eyebrows went up constituted in itself a defense fit to move any jury to acquittal. "For what?" she asked. "For corrupting my young friend Stacey. You made him paint those pictures."

"That's very nice," returned Barbran demurely. "Quite true to the subject."

"They're awful. They're an offense to civilization. They're an insult to our square. Of all subjects in the world, the name of Wheelwright is the most sacred. Why, why, why?" "Business," said Barbran. "Exploit, please," said I.

"I got the idea from a friend of mine in Washington square. She got up a little cellar cafe built around Alice Alice in Wonderland, you know—and the looking glass. Though I don't suppose a learned and serious person like you would ever have read such nonsense."

"It happened to be Friday and there wasn't a hippopotamus in the house," I murmured. "Oh," said Barbran, brightening. "Well, I thought if she could do it with Alice I could do it with Harvey Wheelwright."

"In the name of Hatta and the March Hare, why?" "Because for one person who reads Alice nowadays ten read the author of 'Reborn Through Righteousness' and 'Called by the Cause.' Isn't it so?"

"Mathematically unimpeachable." "Therefore, I ought to get ten times as many people as the other place. Don't you think so?" she inquired wistfully.

"Undoubtedly," I agreed. "But do you love him?" "Who?" said Barbran with a start. The faint pink color ran up her cheeks. "Harvey Wheelwright, of course. Whom did you think I meant?"

"He is a very estimable writer," returned Barbran primly. "Good-night, Barbran," said I sadly. "I'm going out to mourn your lost soul."

ONE might reasonably expect to find peace and quiet in the vicinity of one's own particular bench at 11:45 p.m. in our square. But there sat Phil Stacey. I challenged him at once.

"What did you do it for?" "To do him justice, he did not dodge or pretend to misunderstand. "Pay," said he.

outlanders. But for the most part people didn't come. Until the first of the month that, then too many came. They brought their bills with them.

EVENING after evening Barbran and Phil Stacey sat in the cellar almost or quite alone. So far as I could judge from my occasional visits of patronage, they enjoyed the lack of custom with fortitude, not to say indifference. But in the mornings her soft eyes looked heavy, and once, as she was passing my bench deep in thought, I surprised a look of blank terror on her face. One could understand that even a millionaire's daughter might spend sleepless nights brooding over a failure. But that look of mortal dread! How often have I seen it. What should it mean, though, on Barbran's sunny face? Puzzling over the question, I put it to the Bonnie Lassie.

"Read me a riddle, O Lady of the Wise Heart. Of what is a child of fortune, young, strong and charming, afraid?"

At the time we were passing the house in which the insecticide Angel of Death takes carefully selected and certified lodgers.

"I know whom you mean," said the Bonnie Lassie, pointing up to the little dormer window which was Barbran's outlook on life. "Interpret me a signal. What do you see up there?"

"It appears to be a handkerchief pasted to the window," said I adjusting my glasses. "Slide down," said the Bonnie Lassie.

"How can a handkerchief be up-side down?" I inquired. Contempt was all that it brought me. "Metaphorically, of course! It's a signal of distress."

"In what distress can Barbran be?" "In what kind of distress are most people who live next under the roof in our square?"

"She's doing that just to get into our atmosphere. She told me so herself. A millionaire's daughter—"

"Do millionaire's daughters wash their own handkerchiefs and paste them on windows to dry? Does any woman in or out of our square ever soak her own handkerchiefs in her own washbowl except when she's desperately saving pennies? Did you ever wash one single handkerchief in your rooms, Dominic?"

"Certainly not! It isn't manly. Then you think she isn't a millionaire?" "Look at her shoes when next you see her," answered the Bonnie Lassie conclusively. "I think the poor little thing has put her every cent in the world into her senseless cellar and she's going under."

"But, good heavens!" I exclaimed. "Something has got to be done." "It's going to be," said I.

"Who's going to do it?" "Me," returned the Bonnie Lassie, who is least grammatical when most purposeful.

"Then," said I, "the fates may as well shut up shop and providence take a day off. The universe has temporarily changed its management. Can I help?"

The Bonnie Lassie focused her gaze in a peculiar manner upon the exact center of my countenance. A sort of fairy grin played about her lips. "I wonder if— No," she sighed. "No. I don't think it would do, Dominic. Anyway, I've got six without you."

"Of course," retorted the Bonnie Lassie. "It was he who came to me for help. I'm really doing this for him."

"I thought you were doing it for Barbran." "Oh, she's just a transposed Washington square," answered the tyrant of our square. "Though she's a dear little, too, underneath the nonsense."

"It would be mortifying," admitted Cyrus the Gaunt. "If it weren't in a good cause."

"What cause?" I asked. "Come out of there!" said Cyrus the Gaunt, not to me, but to a figure lurking in the shrubbery. The Little Red Doctor emerged. I took one look at his most distinctive feature.

"You, too!" I said. "What do you mean by it?" "Ask Cyrus," returned the Little Red Doctor glumly.

"It's a cult," said Cyrus. "The credit of the notion belongs not to me, but to my esteemed better half. A few chosen souls."

"Here comes another of them," I conjectured, as a bowed form approached. "Who is it?" MacLachlan.

The old Scot appeared to be suffering from a severe cold. His handkerchief was pressed to his face. "Take it down, Mac," I ordered. "It's useless." He did so, and my worst suspicions were confirmed.

"He bullied me into it," declared the tailor, glowering at Cyrus the Gaunt. "I'll do your nose good," declared Cyrus jauntily. "Give it a change. Complementary colors, you know. What do you order?"

Phil Stacey appeared. Following him were Leon Coventry, huge and shy, and the lethal Boggs looking unhappy. "Where are you all going?" I demanded.

"To the Wrightery," said Phil. "Is it a party?" "It's a gathering." "Am I included?" "If you'll."

"Not on any account," I declared firmly. It had just occurred to me quietly conducted. The case was called the next day before Magistrate Wolf Tone Hanrahan, known as the "human judge." He heard the evidence, tested the sample, announced his intention of coming around that evening for some more, and honorably discharged Barbran.

"And what about this mint?" he inquired, gazing upon the dauntless six. "Dangerous suspects, Yerinner," said Terry the cop.

"They look mild as goat's milk to me," returned the magistrate, "though now I get my eye on the red-headed woman (with a friendly wink at the Little Red Doctor), I recognize him as a despicable character that'd save your life as soon as look at ye. What are they dangerous?"

"When apprehended," replied Terry, looking covertly about to see that the reporters were within hearing distance, "their noses were painted green."

"Is this true?" asked the magistrate of the six. "It is, your honor," they replied. "An' why not?" demanded the human judge hotly. "Tis a glorious color! Officer, ye've exceeded yer footy. Let 'em paint their noses anny color they like; but green for preference. I'm tellin' ye, this is the land of freedom an' equality, an' every citizen thereof is entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, an' a man's nose is his castle, an' don't ye forget it. Dis-char-ge! Go an' sin no more. I mane, let the good worruk go awn!"

"Now watch for the evening papers," said young Phil Stacey exultantly. "The Wrightery will get some free advertising that'll crowd 'em for months."

Alas for youth's golden hopes! The evening papers ignored the carefully prepared paragraph, attributing the green noses to a masquerade party. The conspirators, gathered at the cellar with their war-paints on (in case of reporters), discussed the fiasco in bitterest tones. Young Stacey raged against a stupid and corrupt press. MacLachlan expressed the acridulous hope that thereafter Cyrus the Gaunt would be content with making a fool of himself without implicating innocent and confiding friends. The Bonnie Lassie was not present, but sent word (characteristically) that they must have done it all wrong; men had no sense, anyway. The party then sent out for turpentine and broke up to resemble no more. Only Phil Stacey, inventor of the great idea, was still faithful to the hope of it. Each evening he conscientiously greened himself and went to eat with Barbran.



THE CONSPIRATORS, GATHERED AT THE CELLAR WITH THEIR WAR-PAINTS ON, DISCUSSED THE FIASCO IN EMBITTERED TONES.

to think greenly. But first we must learn to see greenly. How shall we accomplish this? Put green in our eyes? Impossible unfortunately. But our noses—there is the solution. In direct proximity to the eye, the color, properly applied, tints one's vision of all things. Green shadows in a green world," mused Cyrus the Gaunt poetically. "As the bard puts it: 'Annihilating all that's made To a green thought in a green shade.'"

"Wait a minute," said the visitor, and made a note on an envelope back. "Accordingly, Miss Barbran, the daughter and heiress of a millionaire cattle owner in Wyoming (here the reporter made his second note), has established this center where we meet to renew and refresh our souls."

"Good!" said the benevolent reporter. "Fine! Of course it's all bunk—"

"Bunk!" echoed Barbran and Phil, aghast, while Cyrus sat with his lank jaw drooping.

"You don't see any of your favorite color in my eye, do you?" inquired the visitor pleasantly. "Just what you're putting over I don't know. Some kind of new grease paint, perhaps. Don't tell me. It's good enough, anyway. I'll fall for it. It's worth a page story. Of course, I'll want some photographs of the mural paintings. They're all most painfully beautiful. What's wrong with you? You're afraid to be sick!" he added, looking with astonishment at Phil Stacey, who was exhibiting sub-nauseous symptoms.

"He painted 'em," explained Cyrus, grinning. "Barbran's sorry," supplemented Barbran.

"Yes! I wouldn't wonder. Well, I won't give him away," said the kindly journalist. "Now, as to the membership of your circle—"

The Sunday "story" covered a full page. The "millionaire's" feature was played up conspicuously and repeatedly, and the illustrations did what little the text failed to do. It was a "josh story" from beginning to end.

"I'll kill that pious fraud of a reporter," declared Phil. "Now the place is ruined," mourned Barbran.

"Wait and see," advised the wiser Cyrus.

GREAT is the power of publicity! The Wrightery was swamped with custom on the Monday evening following publication and for the rest of that week and the succeeding week.

"I never was good at figures," said the transported Barbran to Phil Stacey at the close of the month, "but as near as I can make out I've a clear profit of \$8.70. My fortune is made! And it's all due to you!"

Had the Bonnie Lassie been able to hold her painted retainers in line, the owner's golden prophecy might have been made good. But they had other matters on hand for their evening's pastime, sitting about in a dim cellar gaining cross-eyed at their own scandalous noses. MacLachlan was the first defector. He said that he was going crazy and he knew he was going blind. The Little Red Doctor was unreliable, owing to the pressure of professional calls. He complained with some justice that a green nose on a practicing physician tended to impair confidence. Then Leon Coventry went away, and Boggs discovered (or invented) an important engagement with a growing family of clothes moths in a Connecticut country house. So there remained only the faithful Phil. One swallow does not make a summer, nor does one youth with a verbal proboscis convince a skeptical public that it is enjoying the fearful companionship of a subversive and revolutionary cult. Patronage ebbed out as fast as it had flooded in. Barbran's eyes were as soft and happy as ever in the evenings, when she and Phil sat in a less and less interrupted solitude. But in the mornings palpable fear stalked her. Phil never saw it. He was preoccupied with a dread of his own.

One evening of howling wind and hammering rain, when all was cozy and home-like for two in the little dreit Wrightery, she nerved herself up to facing the facts.

"It's going to be a failure," she said dismally. "Then you're going away?" he asked trying to keep his voice from quaking.

She set her little chin quite firmly. "Not while there's a chance left of pulling it out."

"Well, it doesn't matter as far as I'm concerned," he muttered. "I'm going away myself."

"You?" She sat up very straight and startled. "Where?" "Kansas City."

"Do you remember a fat old grandpa who was here last month and came back to ask about the decorations?"

"Yes." "He's built him a new house—he calls it a mansion—and he wants me to paint the music room. He likes—"

"Isn't that great!" said Barbran in the voice of one giving three cheers for a funeral. "How does he want his music room decorated?"

Young Phil put his head in his hands. "Scenes from Moody and Sankey," he said in a muffled voice. "Good gracious! You aren't going to do it?"

"I am," retorted the other gloomily. "It's a good month. Almost immediately he added: 'Darn the money!'"

"No, no. You mustn't do that. You must go, of course. Would—will it take long?"

"I'm not coming back."

"I don't want you not to come back," said Barbran in a queer, frightened voice. She put out her hand to him and hastily withdrew it. He said desperately: "What's the use? I can't sit here forever looking at you and dreaming of—of impossible things, and eating my heart out with my nose painted green."

"The poor nose!" murmured Barbran. With one of her home-laundered handkerchiefs she wiped the turpentine she gently rubbed it clean. It then looked as she said later in a feeble attempt to palliate her subsequent conduct) very pink and boyish and pathetic, but somehow faithful and reliable, and altogether lovable.

So she kissed it. Then she tried to run away. The attempt failed.

IT was not Barbran's nose that got kissed next. Nor, for that matter, was it young Phil's. Then he held her off and shut his eyes, for the untrammelled exercise of his reasoning powers. Did he demand of Barbran and the fates:

"What's the use of what?" returned Barbran tremulously. "Of all this? Your father's a millionaire, and I won't—I can't—"

"He isn't!" cried Barbran. "And you can—you will!"

"He isn't!" ejaculated Phil. "What is he?"

"He's a school teacher, and I haven't got a thing but debts!"

Phil received this untoward news as if a flock of angels, ringing joy bells, had just brought him the glad tidings in history. After an interminable silence he said:

"But, why?" "Because," said Barbran, burrowing her nose in his coat. "I thought it would be an asset. I thought people would consider it romantic and give me help business. See how much that reporter ink he writes with, and the paper it's printed on!"

For he had thrust her away from him at arm's length again. "There's one other thing between us, Barbran."

"What is it, it's your fault. What is it?"

"Harvey Wheelwright," he said solemnly. "Do you really like that sickening slush-slinger?"

She raised to him eyes in which a righteous hate quivered. "Loathe him," she always said. "But him, I despise the ink he writes with, and the paper it's printed on!"

When I happened in a few minutes later, they were virtually burning the "Dear Friend and Admirer" letter in a slow candle flame, and Harvey Wheelwright's portrait, painted by his notoriously rolling signature, was writhing in merited torment. Between them they told me their little romance.

Mr. Dooley On St. Patrick's Day

(Continued from Second Page.)

walkin' long ago. I have to tow him down. "What's that noise up th' street? Here they come! Here ar-re th' fellows from the best county in Ireland. See them, will ye, with their martial tread an' their chins in th' air. They make all th' rest iv th' parade look like pigmies."

"An' so ye go by an' I gather up th' children an' take them home to put th' slippers in front iv th' stove an' make th' poultice fr ye."

"An' who's that out in front? Look children, look, I tell ye! There he is! There he da-da!"

"An' b' an' ye come, Hinnessy, with above ye're head an' th' staff stuck so deep into ye that maybe 'twill take Dock O'Leary to get it out."

"Ye can't look aether to th' right or left. Ye can't see where ye're goin'. Ye're eyes ar-re straight ahead. But if that banner goes ye're goin' with it. Hang on, me friend. Tack! Tack! Throw her over. Bring her around. That's it!"

"An' so ye go by an' I gather up th' children an' take them home to put th' slippers in front iv th' stove an' make th' poultice fr ye."

"WELL, I didn't intend to get excited over this Patrick's Day, but somehow or other ivry time it comes around I feel like givin' up on th' roof an' singin' 'O'Donnell Aboob' so all may hear. I don't know why."

"Maybe," said Mr. Hennessy, "tis because ye're Irish."

"I hadn't thought iv that," said Mr. Dooley. "Fraps ye're right. It's something I niver have been able to get over. Be this time it's become an incurable habit."

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